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ABSTRACT

This memorandum of understanding was written to establish the general framework for collaboration among Michigan community colleges in support of technology-mediated courses. It also serves as a formal consortium agreement among member colleges so that students can receive financial assistance while enrolled in courses offered through the Michigan Community College Virtual Learning Collaborative (MCCVLC). Participation in MCCVLC is open to all members of the Michigan Community College Association. The collaborative seeks to extend convenient, affordable access to higher education opportunities using a variety of technologies. This short document outlines issues related to governance, financial support, member participation, degrees and certificates, articulation agreements, financial aid agreements, tuition, and promotion of the collaborative. A common tuition structure dictates that in-district fees will be $90 per credit, out-of-district fees will be $130 per credit, and out-of-state fees will be $170 per credit. No additional fees will be assessed in addition to this tuition. Tuition revenue will be shared in the following proportions: provider college, 70%; home college, 20%; and MCCVLC, 10%. Appended is the MCCVLC Financial Aid Consortium Agreement, the Articulation Agreement, and guidelines for online programs of study, which cover program development, curriculum design, faculty support, student support services, and program assessment. (EMH)

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Memorandum of Understanding

Michigan Community College Virtual Learning Collaborative

The well-being of our society and the foundation of our economy is a well-educated citizenry, and as technology is incorporated into every aspect of our lives, post-secondary education becomes increasingly vital to Michigan and its residents. Extending convenient, affordable access to higher education opportunities has been a long-standing mission of Michigan Community Colleges. This collaborative project will leverage the unique advantages afforded by technology to offer learning opportunities to Michigan residents any time and any place.

Purpose

The purpose of this memorandum of understanding is to establish the general framework for collaboration among Michigan Community Colleges in support of technology-mediated courses and to serve as a formal consortium agreement among member colleges in order that students can receive financial assistance while enrolled in courses offered through the collaborative.

Membership

Participation in this collaborative is open to all members of the Michigan Community College Association. Eligibility for participation is also contingent on maintaining accreditation by the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the North Central Association. The extent to which participating colleges choose to engage in the activities, beyond those basic commitments included in this memorandum of understanding, will be at the sole discretion of each participating institution.

Governance

The Michigan Community College Virtual Learning Collaborative will be sponsored by and operated under the legal authority of the Michigan Community College Association. The MCCA Executive Committee will have the authority to:

- Approve consortium agreement(s)
- Appoint the governing committee for the collaborative

The governing committee of the MCCVLC will include members who currently serve as trustees or presidents of Michigan community colleges; the Executive Committee will attempt to maintain a balance between presidents and trustees on this committee. No more than one member from any college shall serve concurrently on the governing committee. Committee members will be appointed for staggered terms of three years; committee members may not be re-appointed immediately upon the expiration of their term. The president of MCCA will serve as a standing committee member. Responsibilities of the governing committee include:

- Approve MCCVLC strategic plans, budgets and audits
- Select and contract/appoint staff leadership
- Consider issues of MCCVLC policy and make policy recommendations to the MCCA Board of Directors
- Recommend the financial structure, including membership dues, to the MCCA Board of Directors

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Financial Support

Annual membership fees will be recommended by the MCCVLC Governing Committee to the MCCA Executive Committee for adoption by the MCCA Board of Directors.

Fund Procurement

The MCCVLC will provide member colleges with the capacity to compete for funds available from a variety of sources to assist in the development of collaborative programs and services. External funding will be pursued and received by the Michigan Community College Association.

Member Participation

Michigan community colleges have long recognized that successful learning is the result of appropriate student services in support of quality programs of instruction. There is currently no reason to expect that support services will not be equally critical to the success of students enrolled in technology-mediated courses. Thus, this memorandum of understanding will define the role of the college providing the technology-mediated instruction as the "provider" college, while many student support services will be provided by the "home" college. Examples of student services that may be more effectively provided by the home college are:

- Awarding of financial aid
- Test proctoring
- Access to and support for technology / computers
- Advising / counseling

Every member college will be expected to serve as the home college for any student who would select it as their home college. All technology-mediated courses intended for general availability throughout the state shall be made available to learners through the MCCVLC.

Degrees and Certificates

It shall be a common goal of the member colleges of the MCCVLC to collaboratively develop programs of study which may be completed primarily through enrollment in technology-mediated courses. Development of such programs of study will be consistent with guidelines for online programs of study as described in the appendix; these guidelines may be amended from time to time by the MCCVLC governing committee upon recommendation of the MCCVLC staff. It shall be the role of the home college to make such online programs of study available. It is anticipated that students seeking degrees and certificates from member colleges may select courses from multiple provider colleges, and that credits earned for completion of such courses taken through the MCCVLC will fulfill any residency requirements of the program of study.

Articulation Agreement

As a condition of this memorandum of understanding, all member colleges will participate in an articulation agreement as described in the attached appendix. In order to effect this agreement, each member college will participate in a collaborative process to establish and maintain an on-line database of courses to be offered by provider colleges through the collaborative and the equivalent course at each MCCVLC member college. The articulation agreement detailed in the appendix may be amended from time to time by the MCCVLC governing committee upon recommendation of the MCCVLC staff.

Financial Aid Agreement

As a condition of this memorandum of understanding, all member colleges will participate in a financial aid consortium agreement as describe in the attached appendix. Federal student aid eligibility regulations (34 CFR & 600.9, April 5, 1988) require this agreement. The financial aid consortium agreement will take effect with the summer semester of 1999 (the semester beginning on or after May 1, 1999). The financial aid consortium agreement detailed in the appendix may be amended from time to time by the MCCVLC governing committee upon recommendation of the MCCVLC staff and the Michigan Community College Student Services Association and/or the Michigan Student Financial Aid Association.

Promotion of the Collaborative

In order to promote awareness of learning opportunities available through the MCCVLC, each member college may include relevant information about the collaborative in official college communications, both on-line and in print.

Common Tuition Structure

In order to facilitate student enrollment in courses offered by provider colleges through the collaborative, a common tuition structure will be established. Tuition rates will be:

- In-district $90/credit
- Out-district $130/credit
- Out-state $170/credit

No additional fees will be assessed in addition to the tuition above. For purposes of assessing tuition to students enrolled in courses offered through this collaborative, anyone residing within any one of the twenty-eight public community college districts in Michigan will be charged the in-district tuition rate, all other Michigan residents will qualify for the out-district tuition rate.

Tuition Revenue Sharing

Inasmuch as it is anticipated that both the provider college and the home college will contribute significantly to the success of students enrolled through the collaborative, it is appropriate to share the revenue generated by those enrollments. Tuition revenue will be shared in the following proportions:

- Provider college 70%
- Home college 20%
- MCCVLC 10%

Terms of this Agreement

This agreement will serve as the basis for conducting operations of the MCCVLC through December 31, 2003. It may be altered and/or extended upon approval of the MCCA Board of Directors.

_____ Date: _____

_____ Date: _____

Appendix

MCCVLC Financial Aid Consortium Agreement

This agreement among the Michigan community college members of the Michigan Community College Virtual Learning Collaborative is to facilitate concurrently enrolled students receipt of student financial assistance funds. Federal eligibility regulations (34 CFR & 600.9, April 5, 1988) require this agreement. This consortium agreement will take effect upon the signature of the President or designee of each participating member college and will govern the terms of delivery of student aid funds to students seeking financial assistance. This consortium agreement will be modified as required by any changes to Federal eligibility requirements or regulations or by mutual agreement of the participating member colleges.

The MCCVLC financial aid consortium agreement includes the following provisions:

1. A student seeking financial aid under this agreement must designate the educational credential and program that they are seeking and the institution from which they are seeking the credential. Such an institution shall be designated as the "home" college;

2. The institution providing the instruction for such courses as covered under this agreement shall be designated as the "provider" college;

3. The provider college shall provide timely information on student enrollment, expense budgets, academic performance by term, and other information as requested related to these matters to the home college;

4. Student Status Confirmation Reporting (SSCR) to the national Student Loan Data System (NSLDS) shall be the responsibility of the home college; Enrollment status shall be reported on the basis of the total credits accepted by the home college in which the student is enrolled at participating institutions. Enrollment status information will be exchanged at a time and in a manner agreed upon through the auspices of the Michigan Community College Virtual Learning Collaborative (MCCVLC);

5. Students shall submit all required forms for financial assistance to the home college. The home college shall determine special circumstances and be responsible for all professional judgment decisions and determinations related to the student, and may request the collaboration and assistance of the provider college(s) where appropriate;

6. Materials for required student loan interviews shall be provided by the home college until a common form and procedure can be agreed upon;

7. Satisfactory academic progress standards shall be those of the home college;

8. Institutional refund procedures shall be those of the provider for each course enrolled in at the provider college(s). Federal refund calculations and reporting shall be the responsibility of the home college for each student enrolled;

9. Disbursement of financial aid funds shall be the responsibility of the home college. Financial aid will be disbursed by semester on the basis of the student's enrolled status as of the date designated by the home college;

10. The home college for each student is responsible for verification. Verification policies and procedures shall be those of the home college.

Michigan Community College
Virtual Learning Collaborative

Articulation Agreement

This agreement among the members of the Michigan Community College Virtual Learning Collaborative is to facilitate the transfer of courses that students may take through the collaborative. The college identified as the "home" college for each student (the college which offers the program of study in which the student is enrolled and will confer the certificate or degree for that student) will give appropriate credit for courses taken at "provider" colleges on the same basis as if the home college had provided that portion of the instructional program itself. The assumption underlying this agreement is that the home college has found the instruction of the provider college to be equivalent to, and a completely acceptable substitute for, its own instruction.

The home college may decline to give credit for courses not completed satisfactorily by a student. The home college is encouraged to include grades received in courses taken under this articulation agreement in the calculation of the student grade point average.

In order to effect this agreement, each member college will participate in a collaborative process to establish and maintain an on-line database of courses to be offered by provider colleges through the collaborative and the equivalent course at each MCCVLC member college. The content of this database will be available on-line to prospective students, as well as to administrators, faculty, advisors and staff from all member colleges. The responsibility of participating colleges will be to maintain current and accurate information in the on-line database regarding the transferability of courses offered by the provider colleges through the collaborative. Each member will identify an official contact at the college to be responsible for providing information on transferability, and will ensure that the official contact has regular access to electronic mail and access to the Internet.

Michigan Community College
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Guidelines for Online Programs of Study

These guidelines identify the issues that colleges should be expected to address in the development of online programs of study to be offered through the MCCVLC:

Online Program Development Guidelines

- The program of study is consistent with the mission of the college
- The program is consistent with faculty and staff expertise
- A clear need for this program has been identified
- The outcomes of this program have been clearly identified
- Completion of this program of study will result in appropriate credentials for students
- The college will commit to the allocation of resources necessary for program continuation
- Financial resources
- Human resources
- Technology resources
- All required external approvals have been obtained
- All required internal approvals (college curriculum approval process & Board of Trustees) have been obtained

Curriculum Design and Development Guidelines

- The program is developed by academically qualified faculty
- The program is designed to achieve clear and measurable outcomes
- Curriculum development and instructional design are appropriate to online programs of study and online courses, and are consistent with current best practices
- The program is managed and overseen by administrators with knowledge of the issues related to online and distance learning
- The program is a complete program of study, with all necessary components (clinical, laboratory, skills development, and/or skills demonstration) addressed within the program
- The program fosters "community" by incorporating interaction, utilizing technologies appropriate to the program and students. The program will provide for both instructor-student interaction and student-student interaction (as appropriate to the curriculum)
- Program availability over time is clearly described, including the date of initial availability of the program as well as the notification that will be provided to enrolled students in the event that the college needs to terminate the program
- Appropriate institutional policies are in place to address the following issues:
    - Copyright
    - Intellectual Property
    - Acceptable Use of network and technology resources
    - FERPA and other student privacy and/or confidentiality policies
    - Americans with Disabilities Act
    - Policies and procedures for complaint resolution appropriate for online students

Faculty Support for Online Programming

- The college ensures that faculty developing the courses that constitute this program are adequately prepared
- The college ensures that faculty teaching the courses that constitute this program are adequately prepared
- Appropriate faculty support services are in place for course delivery

Student Support Services for Online Programs of Study

Program development addresses these services for online students:

- Authoritative program information will be available online:
    - Requirements for program completion (including any activities that may not be completed online)
    - Program costs
    - Technology requirements
- Program advisement information
    - Name and title of program advisor(s)
    - E-mail address of program advisor(s)
    - Phone number of program advisor(s)
- Program admission requirements and procedures
- Access to required software, media and/or other course materials
- Financial aid for students enrolled in program
- Help desk for any program-specific technologies

Student services that are accessible from the "Home College" through the MCCVLC:

- Library access
- Orientation
- Help desk for general assistance
- Test proctoring
- Tutoring services (note that various home colleges may not have tutors available for all the courses included within each online program of study)
- Placement services

Program Assessment

- The program includes a clearly articulated program assessment plan that includes assessment of program outcomes identified in program development
- Program assessment includes a plan for course-level assessment consistent with the institutional assessment plan and appropriate to online courses
- The program includes a plan for regular program review, including a plan to update and/or improve the program
    - to keep the program content current
    - to maintain consistency with evolving "best practices" in online learning

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